



Report of the Arlington Redevelopment Board to the 2007 Annual Town Meeting April 23, 2007

The Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB), acting as the Town's planning board, is required to issue a report with recommendations to the Town Meeting on each warrant article that proposes to amend the "Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw". The ARB must first hold an advertised public hearing on each such warrant article. The advertisements appeared in the "Arlington Advocate" as required on March 1st and 8th, 2007. The public hearing was held on Monday, March 19, 2007. At its regular meeting on March 26, 2007, the ARB voted on the recommended bylaw language shown below. In each of the warrant articles, the Board's vote was unanimous.

Appearing below are the six articles included in the warrant for the 2007 Annual Town Meeting, which will commence on Monday, April 23, 2007. The intent of each article is briefly explained, followed by the ARB's vote on each article, which constitute its recommendations. Town Meeting members should take particular note of the fact that the recommendations of the ARB, and not the original warrant article, constitute the actual motion that will be considered by the Town Meeting. An ARB vote of "no action" means that the Town Meeting will be asked to vote that no action be taken on the proposed warrant article.

Warrant Article language may be quite general or very specific. The vote must be specific in order to precisely tell how the Bylaw will be modified. Even when the language in the warrant is specific, the vote or recommendation shown in this report may differ slightly from the warrant language. This occurs when errors are discovered, or testimony at the public hearing convinces the ARB that a change from the original warrant article should be recommended. In such cases, the recommended change cannot exceed the scope of the original warrant article. When there is question about the scope of the change, the Town Moderator will determine whether the change exceeds the scope of the original warrant article. Changes to an article which has specific language in the warrant is noted in the votes shown below: additions to the original warrant

article text appear as underlined text, while any deletions to the original warrant article text appear as ~~strike-through~~ text.

ARTICLE 5 ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT / VEHICLE SHARING

The ARB and Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee submitted this article. The ARB supports the proposal to amend the accessory use provisions of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the parking of shared vehicles, such as so-called “Zipcars,” in certain zoning districts. The ARB supports this amendment because it addresses an increasingly popular alternative to private ownership of passenger vehicles, thus helping to reduce the number of passenger vehicles on the roads, and, concomitantly, reducing some of the negative impacts of such vehicles.

VOTED:

That the Town vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw in Article 5, Section 5.04, Table of Use Regulations, by adding after 8.12b. a new use “8.12c., Parking of not more than 4 commercially-owned shared vehicles,” allowing such use by right in certain districts, and by adding the word “Yes” in the following columns: R6, R7, B2, B2A, B3, B4, B5, MU, PUD, and I; and allowing such use by Special Permit in certain districts, by adding the letters “SP” in the following columns: R4, R5, and B1; and,

by adding a new use “8.12d., Parking of not more than 4 commercially-owned shared vehicles, located on land under the jurisdiction of the Town,” allowing such use by right in certain districts, by adding the word “Yes” in the following columns: R6, R7, B2, B2A, B3, B4, B5, PUD, and I; and allowing by Special Permit in certain districts, by adding the letters “SP” in the following columns: R0, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and B1; and,

in Article 2, Definitions, Section 2.01, by adding, following the definition for “Setback,” the definition “Shared Vehicle: A passenger vehicle, not to exceed 5,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating owned by a membership based entity which makes the vehicles available for rent by the hour or day to its members. Shared vehicles are parked at locations remote from the owner entity. Shared vehicles shall not display advertising other than accessory signage which shall not exceed four square feet in total”;

AMENDED ZONING BYLAW**SECTION 5.04 - TABLE OF USE REGULATIONS (Continued)**

										District										
ART 15, ATM 5/91; ART 4, STM 5/97; ART. 14, ATM 4/01; ART. 2, STM 9/04																				
Principal Use		R0	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	B1	B2	B2A	B3	B4	B5	MU	PUD	I	T	OS
8.12b.	Open air parking or storage accessory to a dwelling if owned or used by a person residing in such dwelling	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		
8.12c.	<u>Parking of not more than 4 commercially-owned shared vehicles</u>					SP	SP	Yes	Yes	<u>SP</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>		
8.12d.	<u>Parking of not more than 4 commercially-owned shared vehicles, located on land under the jurisdiction of the Town</u>	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	Yes	Yes	SP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		

Section 2.01 - General**Setback:**

The shortest horizontal distance from the front lot line to the nearest building wall or building part not specifically excluded by Section 6.19.

Shared Vehicle:

A passenger vehicle, not to exceed 5,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating owned by a membership based entity which makes the vehicles available for rent by the hour or day to its members. Shared vehicles are parked at locations remote from the owner entity. Shared vehicles shall not display advertising other than accessory signage which shall not exceed four square feet in total.

ARTICLE 6 ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT / COMPACT CAR PARKING

The ARB and Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee submitted this article. The ARB supports the proposal to amend the parking and loading space provisions of the Zoning Bylaw to increase the size of parking spaces for compact cars, and reduce the percentage of total spaces that may be sized for compact cars. The increase in size of compact car parking spaces reflects a comparison with such spaces in surrounding towns, plus complaints that compact cars have difficulty maneuvering into and out of such spaces as currently sized. The reduction in the percentage of compact cars parking spaces follows the trend over the past few years of the reduction of the number of compact cars that are actually on the roads, thus requiring more full-sized parking spaces to match actual needs and reduce the conflicts that occur when there are more full-sized vehicles searching for too few full-sized parking spaces.

VOTED:

That the Town vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Article 8, Off Street Parking and Loading Regulations, Section 8.12, Parking and Loading Space Standards, in the third sentence, by deleting the words “seven and one-half by fifteen” and inserting in place thereof the words “eight by sixteen”; and,

in Paragraph (11) by deleting the words “40 percent” and inserting in place thereof the words “20 percent”;

AMENDED ZONING BYLAW

Section 8.12 - Parking and Loading Space Standards

ART. 6, ATM 4/94

A parking space may be inside or outside a structure and shall be for the exclusive use of one motor vehicle. Those entered from the front or rear, and stacked spaces, shall have minimum dimensions of eight and one-half by eighteen feet. Compact car parking spaces permitted in accordance with Section 8.12 (11) shall be at least ~~seven and one-half by fifteen~~ eight by sixteen feet. For parallel parking, a space shall have minimum dimensions of eight feet by twenty-two feet, except that such spaces which are open and unobstructed at one end may be only eighteen feet in length. In conforming one and two-family residential side yards, or nonconforming pre-existing one and two-family residential side yards, the width of a parking space may be the width of the side yard, but in no case less than seven and one half feet.

a.

...

(11) The ZBA, or in cases subject to Section 11.06, the ARB, may grant a special permit allowing up to ~~40~~ 20 percent of the spaces in a parking lot or garage to be sized for compact cars.

ARTICLE 7

ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT / OPEN SPACE DISTRICT PARKING

The ARB submitted this article. Last year Town Meeting approved this amendment; however, due to a procedural error regarding notice that invalidated last year's vote, it is necessary to vote on this proposal again. The language of the article is identical to that passed last year. As explained at that time, this proposal, if approved, would confirm the original intent of the vote that created the Open Space District, that is, to allow minimal parking at open space parcels to facilitate access by the public. One such parcel, for example, is Thorndike Field; the Parks and Recreation Commission is investigating the addition of 24 to 45 spaces to serve the playing fields there. The ARB supports the proposal to amend the “Table of Use Regulations” provision of the Zoning Bylaw to allow accessory off-street parking in the Open Space District, and points out that any such proposal will be subject to a special permit and to the environmental design review procedures and standards specified in Section 11.06.

VOTED:

That the Town vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Article 5, Section 5.04, Table of Use Regulations, in the row for Use 8.11 (Accessory off-street parking...), by adding the letters “SP” in the column for the OS District; and,

in Section 11.06, Environmental Design Review, Sub-paragraph b., Application, by adding after Sub-paragraph 2. a new sub-paragraph as follows: “3. Parking in the Open Space District shall be subject to the environmental design review procedures and standards hereinafter specified.”;

AMENDED ZONING BYLAW**SECTION 5.04 - TABLE OF USE REGULATIONS (Continued)**

										District									
ART 15, ATM 5/91; ART 4, STM 5/97; ART. 14, ATM 4/01; ART. 2, STM 9/04																			
Principal Use	R0	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7		B1	B2	B2A	B3	B4	B5		MU	PUD	I T OS
ART. 14, ATM 4/93																			
8.11 Accessory off-street parking and loading spaces conforming to the provisions of Article 8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
																			<u>SP</u>

Section 11.06 - Environmental Design Review

...

2. Any use permitted as a right or by special permit in the Planned Unit Development District and the Multi-Use District shall be subject to the environmental design review procedures and standards hereinafter specified.
3. Parking in the Open Space District shall be subject to the environmental design review procedures and standards hereinafter specified.

ARTICLE 8 ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT / PERMEABLE PAVING

The ARB and Zoning Bylaw Review Committee submitted this article. The ARB supports the proposal to amend the parking and loading space provisions of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the expanded use of permeable paving materials. By allowing the expanded use of permeable paving materials the impacts of overland flows of run-off may be minimized, thus reducing the amount of such flows into the Town's drainage system. Expanded use of permeable paving materials also comports with the objectives of Article 10, Bylaw Amendment/Stormwater Management, of the warrant.

VOTED:

That the Town vote to Amend the Zoning Bylaw, Article 8, Off Street Parking and Loading Regulations, Section 8.10, Pavement of Parking Spaces, by adding the words "porous asphalt, pervious concrete," after the words "bituminous cement, concrete,"; and in the same sentence by adding the words, "grass pavers" after the words "paving stones,"; and

in Section 8.12, Parking and Loading Space Standards, Sub-paragraph a.(1), by inserting before the final sentence the following sentence "The use of porous asphalt, pervious concrete, paving stones, or grass pavers may also be used to meet this requirement, in whole or part, subject to the approval of the Town Engineer.";

AMENDED ZONING BYLAW**Section 8.10 - Pavement of Parking Spaces**

Parking areas with five (5) spaces or less shall be surfaced with a permanent material or binder such as bituminous cement, concrete, porous asphalt, pervious concrete, concrete brick, paving stones, grass pavers, bluestone, stone dust, star pack, or similar stable gravel materials, or other material which shall be non-erosive material.

Section 8.12 - Parking and Loading Space Standards

- a. All parking and loading areas containing over five (5) spaces, including automotive and drive-in establishments of all types, shall be paved and subject to the following:
 - (1) The area and access driveways thereto shall be surfaced with bituminous or cement concrete material and shall be graded and drained so as to dispose of all surface water accumulation in accordance with acceptable engineering practices, and shall be subject to approval by the Town Engineer. The use of porous asphalt, pervious concrete, paving stones, or grass pavers may also be used to meet this requirement, in whole or part, subject to the approval of the Town Engineer. The location of spaces shall be suitably marked by painted lines or other appropriate markings.

ARTICLE 9 ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT / AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Arlington Affordable Housing Task Force submitted this article. The ARB supports the proposal to amend the inclusionary provision of the Zoning Bylaw. The proposed changes will primarily affect the eligibility requirements and pricing of affordable housing. For condos, the change in pricing will increase the number of people who can afford the units, and bring our bylaw more in line with state regulations. The changes to the rent calculation are proposed to make the rents affordable to a lower income group. The affordable rent currently required by the bylaw is actually very close to current market rent for existing units of comparable size.

Additional amendments to the bylaw include a requirement that all affordable units meet the state's requirements for inclusion on the Town's Inventory of Affordable Housing. The state has refined its requirements for affordability over the past few years, which has improved the consistency of programs between communities, and helped to refine the definition of affordable housing. Some of the provisions in Arlington's bylaw are not consistent with the state's requirements.

There are many changes in the warrant article language below. It is our belief that the changes do not affect the meaning of the article as submitted by the affordable Housing Task Force, but merely make it more consistent with the style of the bylaw.

VOTED:

That the Town vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Article 11, Special Regulations, Section 11.08—Affordable Housing Requirements, as follows:

Amend in Section c. Definitions:

Delete existing definition of Affordable Units, and replace with:

"Rental Units priced such that the rent (including utilities) shall not exceed 30% of the income of a household at 60% of median income; or, for homeownership units, priced such that the annual debt service on a mortgage plus taxes, insurance, and condominium fees (assuming a 5% down payment) shall not exceed 30% of the income of a household at 70% of median income."; and,

Delete existing definition of Eligible Households, and replace with:

"For ownership units, a household whose total income does not exceed 80% of the Median Income of households in the Boston ~~Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area~~

metropolitan area as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, adjusted for household size. For rental units, a household whose total income does not exceed 70% of the Median Income of households in the Boston ~~Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area~~ metropolitan area as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, adjusted for household size.”; and,

Amend in Section d. Requirements

Delete existing Section 11.08.d.2., and replace with:

~~“2. Affordable Units shall be priced as follows:~~

- ~~(a) — Rental units shall be priced so that the rent plus utilities shall not exceed 30% of the income of a household at 60% of median income.~~
- ~~(b) — Ownership units shall be priced so that mortgage payment (assuming a 5% down payment) plus property taxes and condominium fees shall not exceed 30% of the income of a household at 70% of median income.~~
- ~~(c) — Affordable Units’ prices shall be calculated such that household size matches the number of bedrooms plus one.”; and,~~

Amend Section d. Requirements

~~Add~~ after Section 11.08.d.2. a new Section 11.08.d.3., as follows:

~~“3. Affordable Units shall conform to all requirements for inclusion on the state’s Subsidized Housing Inventory.”; and, re-number present d.3. to d.4; and,~~

Amend in Section 11.08.d.3.(c) by adding, after the words “room size” the words “and number of rooms.”;

AMENDED ZONING BYLAW

Section 11.08 – Affordable Housing Requirements

.c. DEFINITIONS. The following definitions shall apply only to Section 11.08:

Affordable Units:

~~Residential Units for which the rent (including utilities) shall not exceed 30% of the income of the renting eligible household; or, for which the annual debt service on a mortgage plus taxes, insurance, and condominium fees (assuming a 10% down payment) shall not exceed 30% of the income of the purchasing eligible household.~~

Rental Units priced such that the rent (including utilities) shall not exceed 30% of the income of a household at 60% of median income; or, for homeownership units, priced such that the annual debt service on a mortgage plus taxes, insurance, and condominium fees (assuming a 5% down payment) shall not exceed 30% of the income of a household at 70% of median income.

Eligible Household:

~~A household whose total income does not exceed 80% of the Median Income of households in the Boston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, adjusted for household size.~~

For ownership units, a household whose total income does not exceed 80% of the Median Income of households in the Boston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area metropolitan area as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, adjusted for household size. For rental units, a household whose total income does not exceed 70% of the Median Income of households in the

Boston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area metropolitan area as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, adjusted for household size.

.d. REQUIREMENTS

1. Fifteen percent (15%) of the Residential Units in new Projects shall be Affordable Units. In determining the total number of Affordable Units required, calculation of a fractional unit of .5 or more shall be regarded as a whole unit.
2. Affordable Units shall be priced to be affordable to Eligible Households
Affordable Units' prices shall be calculated such that the household size matches
the number of bedrooms plus one.
3. Affordable Units shall conform to all requirements for inclusion on the state's
Subsidized Housing Inventory.
4. Affordable Units shall be located on the Project site.
 - (a) In exceptional circumstances the ARB may allow the developer to make a financial contribution to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in lieu of providing Affordable Units, if it finds that:
 - (i) it is in the best interest of the Town to do so, or
 - (ii) the provision of Affordable Units would result in a hardship such as rendering the Project economically infeasible.
 - (b) The financial contribution for each Unit shall be equal to the difference between the fair market value of a market-rate unit and the price of an Affordable Unit, and shall be payable in full prior to issuance of a final occupancy permit.
 - (c) Affordable Units shall be dispersed throughout the project and shall be comparable to market-rate units in terms of location, quality and character, room size, number of rooms, number of bedrooms and external appearance.

ARTICLE 11 ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT / MAP CHANGE FOR SMITH STREET

Petitioners (10 registered voters) submitted this article, which proposes to amend the Zoning Map to change the zoning of the parcel of land located at 67 Smith Street from R1 to R2. The property is a single-family home on a 5,845-square-foot lot. The R1 district in this area includes several two-family homes, and is adjacent to an R2 zoning district. The homeowner has requested that the ARB recommend that no action be taken on this article.

VOTED: No action.

ARTICLE 12 BYLAW AMENDMENT / PROHIBITION AGAINST CERTAIN EMINENT DOMAIN TAKINGS

This article, submitted by ten registered voters and changed somewhat by the vote of the Selectmen, is not a change to the Zoning Bylaw, but is a topic of interest to the Redevelopment Board. No town body can exercise eminent domain except the Town Meeting, but the Redevelopment Board acting in its capacity as a redevelopment authority is one of the few town

boards that might consider recommending an eminent domain taking to Town Meeting. The Board feels the proposed article is entirely unnecessary and quite possibly ill conceived. The Board strongly opposes the passage of this article.

The Board discussed the article with its principal proponent, John Belskis at its meeting on March 5, 2007. Mr. Belskis made clear that the article he submitted was identical in language to articles that groups he was associated with were submitting in many communities across the state. He spent the bulk of the discussion describing the ills associated with Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permits but was unable to make any connection between the Comprehensive Permit issue and the proposed limitation on the Town Meeting's authority.

Unlike many municipalities, the Town Charter in Arlington (the Town Manager Act) specifically limits the power of the Redevelopment Board to exercise eminent domain, reserving it to the Town Meeting. The Redevelopment Board generally would be limited to recommending an eminent domain taking to property within an urban renewal area, the designation of which likewise requires Town Meeting action. Unlike Connecticut (and specifically the Kelo example), Massachusetts specifically requires that such eminent domain takings be limited to property that is blighted.

Regarding certain past acquisitions, Town Meeting has even given specific direction that the exercise of eminent domain is not authorized and only a willing purchase can be utilized. It did so in the acquisition of the property that is now McClennen Park. The point is that the Arlington Town Meeting has shown exemplary restraint in its exercise of eminent domain and need not somehow hamstring itself by this unnecessary proposal. The ARB believes that the passage of the proposed bylaw would be nothing less than a vote of no confidence in the mature and considered judgment of future town meetings. Please also remember that an eminent domain taking requires a two thirds vote.

The Board is further concerned that the proposed article, which would prohibit an eminent domain taking if the intent *or result* were to benefit a private party, would increase the likelihood that even legitimate takings intended for public purposes could face legal challenges if an aggrieved party could find an associated private benefit resulting from the taking, no matter how remote or insubstantial it might be. In the urban renewal context, eminent domain takings often give rise to both public and private benefits, and it is difficult to imagine a taking that results in *only* public benefits.

Sometimes it is very useful for a Town to use eminent domain to clear the title of a property it acquires even if there is a willing seller. Had there been title issues and the Town Meeting authorized the use of eminent domain in the McClennen Park property, this proposed bylaw change would have prevented a later Town Meeting action. After acquisition, as part of the development of what was then called the Reed's Brook project, the Town Meeting decided to dispose of a portion of the property it had acquired to create an affordable house lot. The house was sold to a qualifying, but private party.

The ARB unanimously urges a no action vote.

“Planning Dialog”

Interim Report to Town Meeting

April, 2007

Arlington Redevelopment Board



1. Introduction

During the past year, the Arlington Redevelopment Board and Planning Department initiated a process of articulating a vision for Arlington’s future land use. The impetus originally came from the Board of Selectmen, which was concerned about a number of land use issues perpetually facing the town. Following is an update summarizing what we’ve learned from this “visioning,” with an explanation of the process, including where we go from here. Attachment A lists a number of related current planning activities.

2. Recurring Themes

As part of our visioning process the Planning staff has researched Arlington’s past and present to identify trends. Some of this information has appeared in a recent series of articles published in the Advocate. We have found that Arlington is home to nearly as many cars as people. Our schools educate about half as many children now as in 1970, when Arlington was at its peak population of 53,000. The town’s population has declined 21% since that date. We’ve learned that there is one job in town for every three resident workers—a ratio that is the inverse of nearby Burlington. In part, this fact reflects a commercial and industrial sector that, in terms of valuation, is less than five percent of total residential value. By contrast, Cambridge’s commercial and industrial sector is valued at more than half its total valuation of residential properties. Arlington is distinct from surrounding communities with each having a unique character.

Arlington is a conveniently located bedroom community, half as densely populated as Cambridge but more than four times as dense as Lexington—though not nearly as dense as its 1970 self. While population has decreased in the past three decades, the number of households has steadily increased so that household size has fallen, more so than in neighboring towns. With more households and more cars, Arlington may feel denser. Still, we have found that citizens consider Arlington, in the words of one resident, “a high perfect blend of urban and suburban.” Residents

value Arlington's small-town, suburban feel, its open spaces and tree-lined streets, but also prize its semi-urban walkability, affordability, diversity, and commercial uses.

We've been investigating Arlington's past and present, and also thinking about its future. Town population is projected to fall to 37,000 by 2025, from 42,000 now. This further decline can have significant implications for schools. If household size continues to fall, Arlington's relative housing affordability may suffer. If residential development along Massachusetts Avenue continues to replace commercial uses, traffic congestion will likely worsen as even more workers commute to jobs out of town, and through-traffic intensifies.

Town residents have weighed in on some of these issues. Survey and Visioning session results indicate a very high level of support for strengthening Arlington's commercial sector, and for affordable housing. Respondents want to see more parking to accommodate vibrant commercial uses. There is little interest in big-box retail, but strong support for local businesses. Residents also want to retain what they currently value in Arlington, and strongly support protection of open spaces and natural areas. There is equally strong support for improvements that would enhance walkability, safety, and streetscape throughout town.



Respondents favor mixed-use development along Massachusetts Avenue, and overwhelmingly support higher density in commercial zones. In conjunction, respondents support increased height limits to allow on-site parking, and favor the construction of fee-funded structured parking. Strong support for a more vibrant commercial sector extends to establishing neighborhood retail within walking distance of homes. Protecting and enhancing recreational venues and open space are high priorities for residents. From the many comments that respondents offered, it is evident that these places largely constitute Arlington's appeal. Residents are unwilling to sacrifice these

amenities in order to achieve other goals. Rather, respondents support enhancements to their favorite spots, such as boating at Spy Pond, and want to see these areas well maintained.

Visioning session attendees identified Arlington's strengths, particularly noting its robust community involvement; its proximity to Boston and Cambridge; its combination of urban vitality and suburban amenities; its walkability; its restaurants; and its safety. Attendees also identified a series of weaknesses including chronic financial shortfalls and their impacts on park and infrastructure maintenance; traffic congestion and parking shortages; lack of vibrant businesses; inappropriate development of privately owned open space; and the high cost of housing. The opportunities that respondents want to pursue include purchase of the Mugar property and Elizabeth Island; improved maintenance of town infrastructure; improving the retail stores; implementing sustainability planning; and improved parking.

From these results, we identify key responses to these concerns as follows:

- The Town must take strong measures to support and expand its commercial sector, including the provision of necessary parking.
- The Town must protect and enhance its open spaces and recreational venues.
- The Town must address traffic congestion, particularly on Massachusetts Avenue.
- The Town must do more to provide affordable housing.
- The Town must improve walkability and streetscape.

3. Process to date

In June of 2006 the Planning Department and Redevelopment Board submitted an application to the state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) for a grant under the Smart Growth Technical Assistance Program, to help the Town study these planning issues. In November of 2006 EOEA awarded the Town \$28,000, which it combined with CDBG planning money to begin the process of looking at the Town's zoning and other land use laws and policies. In December of 2006 we contracted with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to help us particularly with a Visioning Process. We have called the process a "Planning Dialog".

We began by developing a survey to get input from a broad spectrum of residents and groups on their relative priorities. The goals of the survey were to both educate the public about the trade-offs inherent in all new policies, and to solicit input on residents' priorities. The survey laid out seven broad goals to determine their relative importance. These goals were stated as follows:

- more recreational open space;
- more natural areas;
- more affordable housing;
- more and varied industry;

In each case goals were matched with anticipated consequences. For example, the survey cautions that increasing open space might mean fewer housing options and require new funding, and that more commercial parking might result in more traffic.

The survey appeared on the Town website. In addition, the survey was distributed to a number of local groups, after which members of the Planning Staff and Redevelopment Board met with these groups and discussed the results. The following groups contributed to the Planning Dialog:

1. Board of Selectmen;
2. Vision 2020;
3. Open Space Committee;
4. Historical Society;
5. Parks and Recreation
6. School Committee;
7. Transportation Advisory Committee;
8. Chamber of Commerce;
9. Cultural Council;

The web survey also generated over a hundred returns. To date, almost 200 surveys have been completed and tallied.

The culmination of the first part of this process was a Visioning Session, sponsored by the ARB and Planning Department, and led by MAPC. Approximately 30 people attended, and in small groups discussed Arlington's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

4. Going Forward

The planning dialog will continue for another year, through the 2008 Town Meeting. There will be two more meetings, one focused on commercial growth, and the other on residential development. In addition, there will be one or two dialogs preceding sessions of Town Meeting to solicit input from Town Meeting members. Between now and the end of 2007 we will continue to refine goals, and propose measures to implement those goals. Zoning or other bylaw changes to be proposed for the 2008 Town Meeting may be included in such measures.



ATTACHMENT A: CONCURRENT PLANNING ACTIVITIES

There are many ways to effect change in Arlington in order to secure the future citizens desire. The following list outlines ongoing planning initiatives.

- a. Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Project—The Town currently is working with a consultant to redesign Massachusetts Avenue between the Cambridge City Line and Pond Lane. The design improvements will primarily focus on the East Arlington business district around Lake Street. Public meetings are expected to begin toward the end of spring/beginning of summer this year.
- b. Open Space and Recreation Plan Update—This update is currently under way. A public meeting was held in February of 2006. The new plan is due to the state in August of 2007.
- c. Economic Development Strategy—Development of the strategy is in an early stage. Areas of study will include shoring up Massachusetts Avenue's three retail business districts, and making Arlington a better place to shop. The strategy should be reviewed and finalized over the next couple of months. Implementation of the strategy will be ongoing over the next couple of years.
- d. Burial Space Study—Last year's Town Meeting established a Burial Space Review Committee to explore the feasibility of finding additional burial space. The Committee, which just began meeting, is scheduled to report to the 2007 Town Meeting, but will probably not issue a final report until the 2008 Town Meeting.
- e. Fire Station Study—Last year's Town Meeting established a Fire Station Study Committee to determine whether the Highland Fire Station should be relocated, and, if so, to determine the most appropriate location; to determine what equipment, staffing, and facilities should be provided at the new Highland station; and to undertake such other fire station-related studies as assigned by the Town Manager. The Committee has met several times, and will submit status reports, conclusions, and recommendations to appropriate Town Meetings.
- f. Freedom's Way Heritage Area Landscape Inventory—The Town, in concert with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation, has just completed an inventory of its most treasured historic and recreational landscapes.
- g. Battle Road Scenic Byway—In cooperation with the Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord, and the National Park Service, the Town petitioned the state to designate Massachusetts Avenue a "Scenic Byway". The designation, which the Legislature made in November of 2006, enables the entities to access certain funds to preserve and enhance the features of the byway. A landscape inventory was the first step in this process. The group has now applied for federal funds to complete a management plan for the corridor. A decision on the funding is expected in September of 2007.
- h. Alewife Greenway Park Development (Multi-Use Path)—The Town is working with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation on resolving the environmental issues in the area between Route 16 and the Alewife Brook, in preparation for construction of a multi-use path that parallels Route 16. A current proposal for extension of the MBTA Green Line could result in this path connecting to a new train station, making the Green Line accessible to Arlington residents by foot and bicycle.